



Safe-Childhood

Fighting and preventing
sexual violence



What is sexual violence?

Sexual violence is defined as any sexually related act that happens against a person's will. Sexual acts with children (under 14 years of age) are always considered violence, and in Germany, they always constitute a criminal offense. Sexual violence towards children can take many forms, such as:

- Showing children pornography
- Sexually photographing or filming children
- Pressuring children to do anything sexual with adults, adolescents or other children
- Persuading children to be touched on intimate parts of the body

When committing sexual violence, abusers will exploit positions of power to persuade children to engage in sexual acts.

Furthermore, those affected are often put under pressure by the perpetrators. Positions of power and pressure are also used to keep the victims silent, to instigate feelings of guilt and to enable further acts.

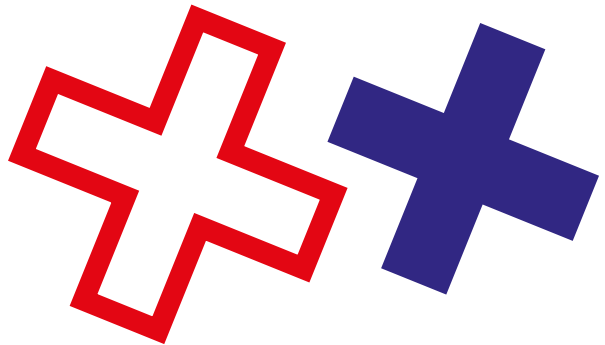


Where does sexual violence take place?

Sexual violence can occur in different places. For example:

- At home
- On the internet
- In private apartments (of adults, where children might spend their free time)
- In a sports club
- At school

The perpetrators usually come from the children's direct social environment. They are often family members, teachers, trainers, etc. However, some also come from outside the familiar environment. These strangers will attempt to gain children's trust in a variety of ways.



What effect can sexual violence have on children?

It is generally difficult for abused children to talk about their experiences and to confide in someone, especially since perpetrators are often acquaintances of the children.

Sexual violence often has a strong emotional impact on the victims. Feelings such as shame, anger, confusion and sadness commonly accompany them in their everyday lives.

However, the way children deal with what they have experienced can vary. Some withdraw from their familiar surroundings, while others act out in anger. Still others may suppress their experiences.

Since every person is unique, there is no single way to react to the incidents, and consequently, the need for assistance also varies. It is, nonetheless, important for those affected to have the chance to process the violence they have experienced.

The victim is never guilty of the sexual violence committed and always has a right to support!

Abusive strategies



Abusers can be complete strangers; typically, however, they are friends or close relatives.



Perpetrators will try to engage a child's interest and to gain his or her trust. They will behave in a particularly friendly manner and may give gifts or offer desirable things to make children happy and comfortable.



Abusers typically demand confidentiality towards the parents, other adults or other children. In this way, targeted pressure is used in order to commit sexual violence.



What to do when something has happened



Keep calm. Your child needs you to be strong and supportive. They trust you; now is the time to show them you are worth their trust. Empower your child who has entrusted themselves to you.



Believe your child. Take the time to listen to their account of what has happened. Let your child, in their own words, explain what they have experienced without „drilling“ or jumping to conclusions. Avoid blaming (e.g. “I saw that coming a mile away. How often have I told you that...”). Document their account afterwards (e.g. note, voice message, etc.)



Talk to another adult you trust. Contact a counseling center (see contact information on the back of the flyer).



Protect your child. He or she is not to blame for what has happened. Avoid contact between your child and the perpetrator. Do not confront the perpetrator!

Preventative measures against abuse



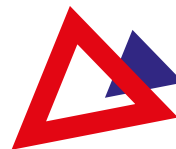
Empower your child. Teach them that saying „no“ is allowed if they feel uncomfortable or a situation appears dangerous. Children should be able to ask for help without feeling embarrassed. Encourage your child to seek help whenever needed. Explain to your child what his or her rights are and what adults are not allowed to do.



DO NOT warn children about »strangers«, as this term isn't clear to them. Talk to your child about with whom they can talk to about secrets or problems. Explain to them: »Children have child friends, adults have adult friends«. Encourage your child to tell you with whom they spend their time.



Keep up to date with what is going on in your child's life. Take time to listen when they talk about the course of their day, their worries and hardships. Speak with your child about their friends. (The responsibility for your child is yours. Your actions are an example to them).

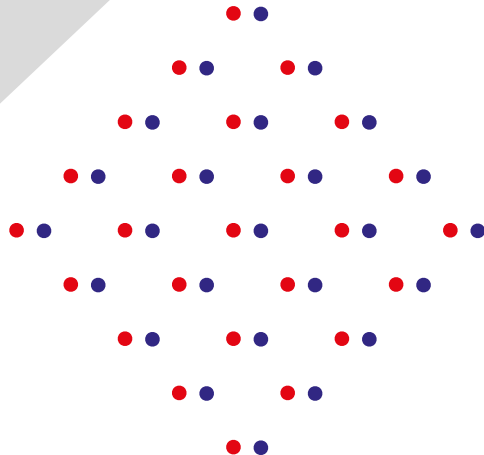




Practice little »what-to-do-if« role-plays with your child to teach them how to react (e.g. to run away, talk to other adults, ask for help or scream). Discuss with your child where to find support in an emergency. Your child should know the police number 110. They should also be in the habit of keeping their distance from vehicles when, for example, directions are being asked.



Agree on safe places and routes together with your child. Teach them age-appropriate ways to be contactable. If possible, children should walk to school with others, and should also never visit playgrounds alone. Your child should learn not to be separated from their group. Determine with your child which adults may accompany them. This should include no more than three or four trusted people.



How can affected children be supported?

Victims of sexual violence often need support in order to understand the incidents and to find a way out of the violence. Friends and family members who believe the children, as well as stabilize and strengthen them, are particularly important. Additionally, counseling centers and therapy can assist children and relatives in processing the violence experienced.



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Hilfe für Jungen* bei sexualisierter Gewalt
HILFE-FÜR-JUNGS e.V.

Here you can obtain information on sexual violence towards boys, and have the opportunity to ask specific questions. We assist abused boys, relatives and professionals, give training on various aspects of our field of work and are also active in the prevention of sexual violence towards boys.

The project ›Mein Limit‹ (my limit) of the organisation FiPP e.V. offers girls and women advice with no obligation, and if necessary, support in subsequent processes. In addition, the project offers low-threshold programs for girls and young women on self-assertion as well as self-defense.



Contact information

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Hilfe für Jungen* bei sexualisierter Gewalt
HILFE-FÜR-JUNGS e.V.

Mein Limit – we advise, support and empower girls and women

(against sexual violence)

Im MiA-Wagen (JFE Fairness)

Ehrenfelder Straße 25 | 12524 Berlin

mein-limit@fippev.de

Parent organization: **FIPP e.V.**



Related Links

Elternguide.online

Medien-kindersicher.de

Klicksafe.de

Child emergency service

030 610061

Police

110

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